GT 6/6/97

# Same-sex marriage ban vetoed

## Romer says bill has fatal flaw

By **Genevieve Anton**/The Gazette

DENVER — Gov. Roy Romer on Thursday vetoed a bill he helped write that would have banned marriages between people of the same sex.

Romer said the measure contained a "serious error" that would have outlawed common-law marriages between men and women.

"We don't need this bill to protect marriage in Colorado. We have a law already on the books that says marriage is between a man and a woman," Romer said. "I support that. But I think there are still some unanswered questions about the practical, daily problems of same-sex partners."

The governor announced he would appoint a committee to study such issues and come up with alternative solutions.

Reaction from the Republican sponsor of the same-sex marriage ban was swift and harsh.

"Governor Romer has broken his promise with the people of Colorado," said Sen. Ken Arnold of Westminster in a press release hours after the veto. "It is clear the governor is bowing to pressures from a few special interest groups."

Arnold said he plans to introduce similar legislation during the 1998 session.

Romer was admittedly reluctant to veto House Bill 1198, because lawmakers adopted almost every word written by the governor himself to get

See **VETO**/NEWS2

"broad, challenging, academically rigorous curriculum." And basic subjects — science, math, social studies and language arts — are the key parts of that curriculum, the statement says.

While some districts merely display their mission and philosophy on signs or stationery, the D-20 board is using theirs as a blueprint.

For example, one sweeping policy says that before any programs are created or cut, or any purchasing or personnel decisions are made, employees and the school board must answer questions like "Is this consistent with the mission of the district?" and "Will this lead to increased student achievement?"

"Now we have a common

house Thursday night damaged crates of household items and personal belongings.

The 6:30 p.m. blaze damaged part of the roof of Federal Moving & Storage Co. Inc., 705 Nichols Blvd. Flames and smoke shot out of several of the hundreds of crates inside the 36,000-square-foot building.

The cause was still being investigated late Thursday; the fire burned for more than three hours until it was under control around 9:45 p.m.

"We just can't get to it. That's the problem," fire Lt. Tom Barron said earlier in the night.

Many of the crates belong to military personnel who needed to store furniture, large appliances and clothes while stationed elsewhere.

into the air, and black smoke could be seen as far as three miles away. Dozens of people walked and drove to the fire.

"Black smoke was rolling out," said Dorothy Gunn, who, along with her husband Jim, drove from their home a mile away to see what was happening. "It looked like a tire fire."

The smoke billowed out as the first three fire engines arrived, including a ladder truck from Fire Station 1 downtown. Firefighters scampered to the roof to dose the flames.

Once the flames on the roof were out, firefighters — still in full gear — drove forklifts into the warehouse, moving 9-foot-tall, 8-foot-long wooden crates onto El Paso Street.

they suffered mentally and physically after church members forced them into being baptized.

In closing arguments delivered Thursday after seven days of testimony, plaintiff attorney Ed Farry said the case is not about what the church believes but how it carries out its mission.

"It's about the impact it's had on these children," Farry said. He said the church's main goal was to get their numbers of baptisms up by using "a slick ad campaign" to coerce children into coming to the church.

He said the children suffered battery because they were dunked in a tank of water against their will.

He also said the church concealed facts from the children. They were under the impression they were going to the church to have water fights and ice cream sundaes, Farry said.

But defense attorney Bill Ritter told jurors in his closing arguments that the children are

# Veto/Romer vetoes several bills in eleventh hour

From NEWS1

the bill signed.

"I've spent a lot of time on this issue over the past two months, a lot of time," he said. "When we began to work on this legislation, I was hopeful it would clarify existing law, not polarize us further. But as I watched the debate it became clear that no matter how hard we tried, it was negative and divisive."

The same-sex marriage ban was one of several bills vetoed by Romer at the last minute. Although the deadline for accepting or rejecting legislation is midnight tonight, the governor said Thursday he's finished.

Of 338 bills sent to him by the General Assembly, he has vetoed 27 — including some parts of the state budget bill — and let four become law without his signature. That's more heavy-handed than Romer was last year when he rejected only 19 bills, but the governor said it wasn't a conscious effort.

"There were just that many more bills I thought were no good," he said.

One of those "no-good" bills was a plan to review tenured professors at Colorado colleges every five years. Romer said he likes the idea of performance evaluations for faculty, but he vetoed HB1341 because lawmakers took out a due-process requirement.

"Employees can't be yanked from their jobs without due process — that ought to be available to everybody," he said.

He also rejected a bill by Rep. Doug Dean, R-Colorado Springs, to give charter schools 95 percent of what is given to public schools in that district. The current rate is 80 percent, and while Romer said that might be too low, he thinks the bill's solution is too high.

"Charter schools are an important part of public education and provide parents choice," he said. "However, because they are relatively new, the jury is still out on what an equitable level of funding is for them."

Other bills vetoed included:

- Clarification of authority between the state and counties over the regulation of solid-waste landfills.
- Legislative monitoring of nonprofit entities created by state agencies.
- The lifting of restrictions on interest rates that lenders are allowed to charge consumers.

One measure Romer reluctantly let pass into law without his signature will limit the use of robotic cameras by municipalities to catch speeders and red-light runners and to issue traffic tickets. While he said he supports local control, the governor said the Senate vote of 31-3 was enough to convince him lawmakers were determined to have some oversight.

# TION STARTS WITH A SPLASH